

Ecological Sustainability Forum August 6, 2013

Break-out group: Aquatics and Hydrology

Presenters: Kevin Leftwich and Bill Hansen

Notetaker: Amy Fore

Public comments

CATENA Report- How can the public obtain a copy of it? This information will be posted on the FMS public website.

Will assessment reports be available on a forest plan website? Meeting notes and the assessment report will be posted at

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/scnfs/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5393142>

Aquatic recreation. Woody debris vs boating-Aquatic needs vs. recreationists' desires –The question came up to address any concerns that boaters wanted to open water trails through removal of downfall. Often streams are wide enough that boaters do not need to remove downed woody debris in order to canoe or kayak.

Hydrologic Restoration Opportunities (Strategic Approach is necessary) – FM staff agree that this is an important topic. Public input indicated a desire for a strategy to identify opportunities for hydrologic restoration on the forest.

Santee River has extensive mussel fauna. Forest Service needs to recognize this habitat. – This information will be posted on the FMS public website.

Would it make sense to restore streams from larger to smaller? Where there are known barriers it might be best to start small. Bill Hansen replied that depending on circumstance, it is often better to work from small to the large streams. One exception to this rule of thumb is dealing with aquatic passage issues.

Higher intensity storms may impact our aquatic assets. Responding to this concern requires a team approach that involves the engineers and the biologists.

- Need for more inclusive inventories
- Utilize better tools (culverts) We need an inventory of culverts etc that can be identified as aquatic passages. Currently there is limited information on culverts and the associated aquatic passage concerns on the forest.
- Better education

Water Quality impacted by sources – Feral Hogs - Addressing water quality from non-native, invasive species (NNIS), such as feral hogs requires an integrated approach. NNIS affect multiple resource areas, which could affect the benefits that the public expects from the Francis Marion National Forest.

Will removal of aquatic passage barriers (dikes, dams) impact amounts and flows of salt water into the forest? There will be tradeoffs, which may result in locally positive and negative effects, depending on the point of view. In most circumstances, the benefits of restoring streams outweigh the negative impacts.

Will there be a recommendation for comprehensive studies on Santee dam, Intracoastal Waterway on forest impacts? (Santee dam Federal Energy Regulatory Commissions (FERC) re-licensing project) There was some discussion by Bill Hansen regarding the ongoing FERC relicensing process, but comprehensive studies of this nature are very expensive. The re-licensing process is separate from the Francis Marion Plan revision process, but outcomes from one process may feed into the other.

To learn more about on the relicensing of the Santee-Cooper Hydroelectric Project, Docket No. 199 go to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's website at www.ferc.gov.

- A copy of the FEIS may be viewed on the Commission's website at <http://www.ferc.gov>, using the "e-Library" link. Enter the docket number P-199. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll-free at (866)208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202)502-8659.
- You may also register online at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp> to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support. For further information, please contact Monte TerHaar at (202)502-6035 or at monte.terhaar@ferc.gov.
- At the request of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Commission staff will meet with representatives of NMFS and South Carolina Public Service Authority (SCPSA), the Commission's non-federal representative for the Santee-Cooper Project, to continue the on-going discussions of what is needed to complete formal consultation for the shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. The meeting will be held on Thursday, September 19, 2013, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at NMFS' office at 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida. All local, state, and federal agencies, and interested parties, are hereby invited to attend and observe this meeting. Questions concerning the meeting should be directed to Robert Hoffman of NMFS at (727) 824-5312.